The President’s Message
BY BECKY SPATES, MS, RD, DLN

The career paths for dietitians continue to expand. Areas of private practice continue to expand. Opportunities to work in health clubs, clinics, physicians’ offices, media, eco friendly operations, communications and health care are increasing. Dietitians are filling more leadership positions.

Just reviewing the agenda for the annual meeting in May demonstrates all of the diverse areas of practice. In addition RD’s are finding increased value working at associations. The opportunity to expand your leadership, organizational and presentation skills can be sharpened by taking a position within a professional organization. Relationships, networks and partnerships provide a stepping stone to further your career path.

“Alliancing” is the next step beyond networking. Have you ever tried to write an “Infomercial” about your expertise? How do you communicate what you do in a concise, memorable manner? You want to stand out and be impressive so people will ask you to show them how you do what you do. How do you reach your goals? We want our passion to show.

You may have already heard from our nominating committee to request your participation in NJDA. This is your association and it will meet your needs only if you reach out to the leaders as well as stepping up and becoming one of the leaders. The field of dietetics is being recognized – we celebrated the first National Dietitians Day this year.

Finally you may have reviewed the ADA national strategic plan which has been posted on the ADA website. Several years ago NJDA began the process of developing a strategic plan. We started outlining where we wanted to see our state association go. At the forefront of this plan was and continues to be licensure. This year we are moving forward with this and fully intend to achieve this goal. As part of my final months as president I hope to finalize our state strategic plan and present it to the NJDA Board and the membership at large to set our future course.

I would like to challenge each of you to step out of your comfort zone and be a part of your association. One example of a great infomercial for you when asked what you as a dietitian do don’t just say I am a dietitian say “I help people use the power of food to stay alive and get the most out of life.”
One day a man was walking along the seashore. He noticed that during the night many seashells and starfish had washed up on the shore. Thoroughly enjoying the morning sun and cool sea air, the man strolled for miles along the sand.

Far off in the distance, he saw a small figure dancing. The man was joyous that someone was celebrating life in such a grand and uninhibited manner. As he drew closer, however, it became apparent that perhaps the figure was not dancing but was repeatedly performing some ritual.

Approaching the small figure, the man noticed that it was a child. The girl was methodically picking up starfish from the shore and tossing them back into the surf. The man paused for a moment, puzzled, then asked, “Why are you throwing those starfish?”

“If I leave these starfish on the beach,” she replied, “the sun will dry them, and they will die. So I’m throwing them back into the ocean because I want them to live.”

The man was silent for a moment, impressed with the child’s thoughtfulness. Then he motioned up and down the miles and miles of beach and said, “There must be millions of starfish along here! How can you possibly expect to make a difference?”

The young girl pondered the man’s words for a moment, then she slowly leaned over, reached down, and carefully picked up another starfish from the sand. Pulling back, she arched the starfish gently into the surf.

She turned to the man and smiled. “You may be right,” she said, “but I made a difference for that one!”

-Author Unknown
A Conversation with Health Commissioner Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D. - How Can New Jersey Nutrition Professionals Make a Difference in New Jersey’s Obesity Crisis?

By Denise Langevin, M.S., R.D.

Nearly 150 New Jersey dietitians and students met for a Conversation with Health Commissioner Fred M. Jacobs, MD, JD About New Jersey’s Obesity Crisis on December 7, 2007. The event was a collaboration between New Jersey Dietetic Association, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-Institute for Nutrition Initiatives and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). It was an opportunity for us to hear about the extent of the problem in NJ as well as to learn about available initiatives and resources and brainstorm ideas to address this issue.

Denise Langevin, President-Elect of NJDA, moderated the program. Denise was NJDA’s representative to the New Jersey Obesity Prevention Task Force so she started off the program with an overview of the mission and work of that Task Force. The Task Force worked for 18 months to develop the NJ Obesity Prevention Action Plan which is available as a PDF document at http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/documents/obesity_prevention.pdf The plan outlines 7 goals for NJ with actionable steps delineated for each goal and contains links to many resources and references.

Commissioner Jacobs then spoke about the obesity crisis. He noted that obesity and secondhand smoke are the top two preventable causes of illness, disability and death in the US and that the prevalence of overweight in US children and teens has more than tripled in the past 25 years. He reminded us of the many consequences of this obesity epidemic and emphasized that our environment does not necessarily support health promoting behaviors. He reported on studies that have suggested that children’s good eating habits decline with age. The Commissioner emphasized the importance of all parts of the community working together to support healthy eating and physical activity. He reported on the establishment of the Office of Nutrition and Fitness within the Department of Health and Senior Services to coordinate obesity initiatives across the state and challenged us to get involved at all levels. Commissioner Jacobs, who spoke to groups around the state on the obesity issue, was a wonderful advocate for action in this area. Although Commissioner Jacobs retired from his position effective January 1, 2008, the legacy for action on the obesity crisis that he left behind will live on. After his presentation, NJDA presented him with a plaque recognizing his important work in improving the health of New Jersey citizens and being such a strong advocate in our fight to combat obesity.

Following the Commissioner’s presentation a panel discussion among NJ experts was facilitated by Karin Mille, from the New Jersey DHSS. Janet Renk, Coordinator of School Nutrition Programs at the NJ Department of Agriculture talked about New Jersey’s Model School Nutrition Policy and urged the audience to get involved by volunteering for Wellness Committees in local school districts. Judy Doyle, Project Manager from the NJ Health Care Quality Institute described the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign which equips mayors with the tools to develop and implement healthy living initiatives within communities. She specifically discussed a planned initiative to promote weight loss competitions between communities and urged dietitians to get involved with these initiatives. Elizabeth Moody from the NJDHSS described Community Health Improvement Plans that all counties have been

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Legislative Day held on March 6, 2008 was a huge success as a two-fold event. It allowed our members to introduce themselves to eighteen legislators along with additional state staff and to talk to them about our licensure bill. In addition, it gave us an opportunity to celebrate National Nutrition Month with our New Jersey legislators.

A huge note of thanks to twenty-two of our members and students who assisted us with facilitating this “Lunch and Meet” event held in Room 109 of the Statehouse. The event from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. included a delicious stir-fry prepared by Chef Diane Barrett, RD and Isabelle Barroqueiro, RD creating a wonderful aroma that filled the halls of the State Capitol. Pat Utke, RD co-chair of the event with Karen Ensle RD provided three National Nutrition Month displays and five balloon bouquets that decorated the room. Legislators received a folder of information on licensure along with National Nutrition Month Fact Sheets and brochures on nutrition along with magnets with our new NJDA logo. A delicious, light and healthy lunch was planned by Audrey Adler RD and her subcommittee using the Statehouse caterer. Thank you to Jackie Gomes, RD and Pathmark stores for supplying bottled water which we affixed with NJDA labels and distributed to all who came. The staff and lobbyists from the Princeton Public Affairs Group assisted us in developing the invitations, setting up the room and making sure a Governor’s Proclamation for National Nutrition Month, 2008 was available. In addition, Assemblyman Herb Conaway, MD is the primary sponsor of our licensure bill in the Assembly and his District 7 colleague, Assemblyman Connors, is willing to co-sponsor the bill with him.

Thank you to Denise Langevin, RD, President-elect, for writing “talking points” for our members, so they felt comfortable talking to legislators about the importance of legal recognition in New Jersey. The event had a steady stream of legislators and Trenton staff over the three hours. All eighteen legislators that attended were positive about our bill. Some said they would be co-sponsors and ALL had positive responses to our need to regulate our profession. The timing of our Legislative Day was perfect as our bill is ready to be released any day. By the time this goes to print we should have a bill number and we should be on our way! If you are interested in being added to our NJDA Legislative Committee, please e-mail Karen Ensle ensle@aesop.rutgers.edu. Updates of our legislative and licensure issues are disseminated through this list.
ADA and the Issues

ADA works on a broad agenda of food, nutrition and health issues in Washington and in the states. In early 2008, ADA's efforts will initially focus on two especially important issues: improving the nutrition provisions of the farm bill and expanding Medical Nutrition Therapy in both Medicare and Medicaid.

Farm Bill

Both the House and Senate passed a farm bill last year. Early in 2008, a conference committee between the House and Senate will attempt to draft a compromise version of the bill to send to the President. ADA's basic message is that the new farm bill must match new nutrition authorities with necessary resources so all Americans can live in a food and nutrition environment conducive to better health. ADA's stance is that the farm bill needs to include:

- Funding for food and agriculture research
- A funded food stamp program that includes a pilot program to help food stamp recipients choose diets consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Initiatives to improve the school food environment through healthful offerings and nutrition education
- Rebalancing of food and agriculture program benefits.

Medical Nutrition Therapy

The House did pass a bill which would designate MNT as a preventive service for Medicare and as such would waive the 20 percent co-payment charged to beneficiaries. The bill also would give Medicare the authority to expand the MNT benefit in conditions where it is reasonable and necessary for the prevention or early detection of an illness. That bill is still pending in the Senate.

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This workshop is ADA’s premier advocacy and grassroots training meeting. “Food, nutrition and health legislation converge in the field of dietetics.”

To help build support for the provisions contained in the House-passed bill, ADA members will ask senators to co-sponsor a bill introduced by Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), S. 1161, the Medicare Medical Therapy Act. This gives Medicare the authority to expand the benefit. Representatives serving in the House will be asked to co-sponsor a companion bill, H.R. 2805 introduced by Rep. Xavier Becerra (D.-Calif.). Members of the House also will be asked to co-sponsor a bill introduced by Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.), H.R. 2922 that expands the MNT benefit to cover beneficiaries diagnosed with pre-diabetes and its risk factors.

It is an important time for us as a profession. If you would like your voice to be heard our Association has made it easy for you. A new feature has been added to help you. Go to www.eatright.org, log in, Double click the Advocacy and the Profession tab, on the next page on the left hand side, double click “Grassroots”. The menu will provide you with many choices. Contacting your legislators will provide you with a form letter, and the address for your congressmen. You can send an email or fax expressing your concerns and asking for their support regarding these important issues.

If you have never attended a PPW, plan for next year. Any member can attend PPW and ADA now offers some scholarships for first time attendees. Many in our group have attended previous PPW’s and would more than happy to share their experiences with you. Get involved—get focused—and remember you are the strongest advocate of Nutrition.

Thank you for assisting with 2008 Legislative Day

Audrey Adler, Luncheon Subcommittee, Chair
Susan Anthony, Legislative Committee
Diane Baravecchio, Legislative Committee
Diane Barrett, Stir-fry Demo, Legislative Committee
Isabelle Barroqueiro, Stir fry, Demo, Legislative Committee
Tricia Davidson, State Legislative Chair, Legislative Committee
Katie Day, MSU student and Legislative Committee
Karen Ensle, Legislative Day Chair, Legislative Committee
Jackie Frederick, Legislative Committee
Joanne Friedman, Legislative Committee
Jackie Gomes, Pathmark Stores, Legislative Committee

Sandra Grenci, Legislative Committee
Meg Klein, Legislative Committee
Denise Langevin, Licensure Chair and President-elect
Erlisa Levin, Legislative Committee
Rosemary O’Dea, Legislative Committee
Juliet Songco, Legislative Committee
Maria Stanish, Legislative Committee
Felicia Stoler, Legislative Committee
Pat Utke, Legislative Day Co-Chair, Display Subcommittee Chair
Paul Young, MSU student and Legislative Committee
Briana Young, College of St. Elizabeth Dietetic Intern
NJDA 76th Annual Meeting 2008

Dietetic professionals make a difference every day and we are celebrating that as the theme of our 2008 NJDA Annual Meeting. This year’s meeting will be held Friday May 16, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency New Brunswick. We have an exciting program lined up with many great topics that touch on the myriad of areas where dietetic professionals are making a difference.

This year topics include the latest approach to disease management in the following areas:

- **Celiac Disease Management** – This session will explore why Neurologists, FP’s, Dermatologist’s and others are testing for Celiac disease without GI complaints and the Non Celiac use of gluten free diets as well as the changing food label from both the consumer and manufacturer perspective.

- **Sleep Disorder and Weight Management** – This program will provide the Dietetic professional with updated information on the assessment and treatment of sleep disorders and will discuss how sleep patterns and disorders affects weight gain, hormonal balance, and the development of diseases related to metabolic syndrome and obesity.

- **Food Choice Challenges for Weight Management and Blood Glucose Control** – This session will review the new diabetic exchange lists and how dietitians can effectively counsel their clients with and education tool for high fiber-carbohydrate controlled diets.

- **Sarcopenia and Aging** – This presentation will include discussion of protein’s role in aging populations, including description of the unique dietary needs of older individuals.

Other topics include savvy strategies for managing the department of health surveys, effective skills to manage the media, strategies to encourage small steps to wellness and wealth, and advances and treatment for PCOS.

The conference brochure was sent to NJDA members in March, be sure to join us on May 16, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency in New Brunswick, NJ. See you there!

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Julie O’Sullivan Maillet, Associate Dean, UMDNJ-SHRP and Past President of ADA, summarized the day’s take home message: Beyond thinking, act and act beyond your job. Julie suggested the following five actions:

- Talk it up – advocate to everyone: governor, legislators, cabinet
- Coordinate and act locally – work with the State, local businesses, the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign, within schools and workplaces
- Battle for private insurance reimbursement and battle for Medicare/Medicaid coverage for obesity
- Do research and demonstration projects
- If no time, give money to NJDA PAC or ADA-PAC. Everyone should be able to give time or money.

Overall, it was a wonderful afternoon and hopefully this call to action will motivate all of us to utilize the resources that were provided and to collaborate for a healthier New Jersey.
May 1, 2008
FIA (Foodservice Institute of America) will host the second in the FIA Advantage Series, Industry Survival: Overcoming Commoditization—from Food to Equipment to Human Resources. This interactive symposium will explore the impact of commoditization, offer tools and strategies to thrive in any environment. This program will be held at Caesars Atlantic City, New Jersey. For more information call (609) 645-3131 or visit online at http://www.fia-us.org/news_events/MaySymposium.shtml

Contact:
Hyatt Regency New Brunswick
Two Albany Street • New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Call (732) 873-1234 and ask for NJ Dietetics’ Association special rate of $179.00 for single or double occupancy. Reservations must be made by 4/25/08.